

48th Assembly

February 2004



NEWSLETTER

Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas Hosts Second 48th District Empowerment Congress Budget Town Hall Meeting

*California's State Budget Challenge:
Working for Economic Justice*



Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas presides over the Town Hall and encourages citizens to convey their concerns to lawmakers.



Chris Woods, Chief Consultant to the Assembly Budget Committee, explains the state budget process as Tyron Freeman, President of SEIU Local 434B, and others participants listen and take notes.



Majority Leader Dario Frommer addresses audience members as Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas listens.

During the King Day Weekend Celebration, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) hosted the Assembly District Empowerment Congress' (ADEC) Second Annual Budget Town Hall Meeting titled "California's State Budget Challenge: Working for Economic Justice" for 250 residents of the 48th Assembly District and surrounding areas to closely ex-

amine the Governor's budget and its ramifications on local services. The town hall, held at the California Hospital Medical Center, featured presentations on the state budget and testimony from district stakeholders, public officials and residents on topics devoted to education, health care, social services and local government.

"Today's discussion of the budget and economic justice

is very timely as we celebrate the birth of the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," said Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas as he addressed participants. "Dr. King dedicated his life to social change and economic justice and would view a government's budget as the clearest expression of its priorities and aspirations for the people it represents. Your participation at today's event is an appropriate celebration of Dr. King's life and work."

Community leaders who

provided testimony on the impact of Governor Schwarzenegger's newly proposed 2004-05 budget were Mona Field, President, Los Angeles Community College District; Tyrone Freeman, President, Service Employees International Union, Local 434B; William Fujioka, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Los Angeles; Paul Hernandez, Manager, Public Relations, The California Endowment; Honorable Marguerite Poindexter LaMotte, Board Member, First District, Los Angeles Unified School District; Holly Mitchell, President, Crystal Stairs; Angela Sanbrano, Executive Director, Central American Resource Center; Dr. Robert Splawn, Medical Director, California Hospital's Center for Emergency Service; Marie

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Budget Town Hall Meeting

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S. Torres, Ph.D., Senior Vice-President, AltaMed and Dae Yoon, Executive Director, Korean Resource Center.

In addition to presenting feedback on the cuts proposed by the Governor's spending plan to Mr. Ridley-Thomas, community service providers were also able to share their concerns with Assemblymembers Mervyn Dy-



Holly Mitchell, President of Crystal Stairs, presents testimony to Assemblymembers on the impact of the proposed budget cuts to child care delivery services.

mally (D – Los Angeles) and Dario Frommer (D – Glendale). Mr. Dymally is a member of the Assembly Budget Committee and Mr. Frommer is the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Health.

Ridley-Thomas Small Business Study Bill Advances to the Senate

The California State Assembly approved a measure authored by Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) which calls for a small business study. AB 1643 requires an evaluation of the Employment Development Department's employee/independent contractor classification process for small business to address a problem experienced by many of the State's entrepreneurs. A misclassification presents huge challenges for small businesses as the employee designation requires compliance with several state and federal anti-discrimination and safe workplace laws. In contrast, the independent contractor classification does not have the same legal requirements.

"Assembly Bill 1643 would shed needed light on problems with the state's contracting rules that have for years harmed businesses, stopped companies from working together and dampened the

state's economy," said Betsy Berkehrer-Credaire, head of the National Association of Women Business Owners-California (NAWBO-California) which represents one million women-owned businesses and is the sponsor of the measure. "NAWBO-California has made revamping of the state's contracting regulations a priority because many of our own members, and no doubt countless others statewide, suffer under the state's existing rules," said Berkehrer-Credaire, owner of California Communications, Inc., in Los Angeles.

In addition to the support from NAWBO, AB 1643 enjoys the support of the telecommunications giant SBC, Inc., the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Sacramento Urban League. The measure now moves to the State Senate for hearing in a policy committee where it will be considered this Spring.

Days of Dialogue Forum Used to Prepare Intervention Specialists for Summer Violence

On January 8th, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) hosted the first-of-its-kind discussion to give trained gang intervention specialists from throughout Los Angeles County an opportunity to discuss challenges in combating gang violence, discuss the problem of unsolved murders and develop a collective strategy in preparation for the summer months when gang violence escalates. The event, sponsored by the Days of Dialogue and held at the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles, was also convened for the purpose of strengthening the network of the Association of Community-based Gang Intervention Workers.

Attendees included representatives from the City of Los Angeles Bridges Program and gang intervention specialists from various community religious, health and public

safety organizations. All gang intervention specialists who participated in the event are graduates of the Youth and Gang Violence Intervention Specialist Program. Program participants receive over 100 hours of training in issues ranging from the nature of youth violence and the rise of gangs, to community organizing efforts to stop violence and the varying successes of truces and peace treaties. The goal of the certificate program is to improve the quality of violence prevention and gang intervention services in the City of Los Angeles. Since its inception in 2000, 190 individuals have completed the curriculum.

Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas is the Chair of the Days of Dialogue, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to be a catalyst in the community problem solving process by creating dialogue on sensitive social issues among diverse community groups and author of Assembly Bill 993. The measure seeks to establish an interdisciplinary task force to study violence prevention strategies and make policy recommendations on how to reduce gang-related homicide in California.

Upcoming Events:

Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy *presents*

"Small Business: Obstacles to Job Creation"

February 27, 2004 • 0am - 12pm • California Science Center

Assembly Select Committee on Professional Sports *presents*

"The Economic Impact of Professional Sports"

March 5, 2004 • 10am - 12pm • Bank of America Conference Room, Staples Center

Assembly Committee on Adult Education and the Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy *presents*

"Bridging the Gap: Establishing a Framework for Cooperation"

March 12, 2004 • Time: TBA • Venue: TBA



Don't Forget to Vote on March 2nd!